

Vetrete
18MAR2007
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Camp Rambala —Friday, the Wyoming Army National Guard Medical Command began day-one of a four-day veterinarian mission to set up a clinic at the school of Quebrada Pastor to provide veterinarian care to local animals.

Setting up a clinic for animal care, or a Vetrete, for the local people of Panama, is part of the humanitarian mission of New Horizons 2007. It is also a real world training exercise which provides Army veterinarians the opportunity to gain extensive knowledge on their MOS skills.

"This is a really good opportunity to learn about different cultures, work with different people, work with the animals, and expand our knowledge while helping others," said 2nd Lt. Jason Kinder, a 2nd grade teacher in Cheyenne, Wyoming, but a vet tech in the National Guard. "I have done this before in the Dominican Republic, but nothing to this caliber."

"It's an extensive project that encompasses a lot of work but it allows us to get a very good idea and a good feeling of the animal population in this area. It allows for people with limited means in this area to have medical care for their livestock and other animals," said Cartenas Ricardo, chief veterinarian for this province, who observed and assisted the Vetrete team as well.

A three man team consisted of a veterinarian and two vet techs came fully armed with small and large animal vaccinations, antibiotics, surgical equipment, anti-inflammatory medicine, bandage material, and medicine for de-worming.

"We're here to provide service for all animals that show up," said Maj. Marshall Kohr, preventative medicine officer for his unit who also has his own private practice back home. This is the first Vetrete for Maj. Kohr who has been a large animal veterinarian for 19 years in his civilian life and for five years in the Army.

"I expect to see a lot of healthy animals, so most of today will primarily involve vaccinations and de-worming, but we can also handle the injured and the sick," said Kohr. "Most of the sick animals suffer from parasites, allergies, anemia and malnutrition due to lack of better care of the animals," said Ricardo.

However, there are some limitations to what can be done in the field. For example, they have limited anesthesia, no extra source of blood supply for surgeries, radiology, x-rays or lab work. Yet those limitations did not stop the Vetrete team from removing the hernia and testicles of a small piglet after his owner complained that the animal had not been eating.

"If we had not done this today, the animal would have died," said Kohr.

The first day of the Vetrete ended successfully after treating four pigs, two parrots, 14 cows, and an endless number of cats and dogs. But not without Maj. Kohr speaking to the students and staff of the school about the importance of future care for their animals.

“A good thing about this training is that I get to do what I love,” said Kohr, “but the best part is having an impact on their lives.”

Photo cut lines

VETRETE01.jpg –Vet Techs 2nd Lt. Jason Kinder and Pfc. Karter Unverzaht position the piglet just right for the Maj. Marshall Kohr, veterinarian, to remove his hernia.